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(L.A. Bill No. 12 of 1961), as passed by the Assembly on the 25th March 1961 for the recommendations of the Council and he has certified that the Bill is a Money Bill within the meaning of Article 199 of the Constitution of India.

III—CALLING ATTENTION TO THE WINDING UP OF THE STATE BROADCASTING BRANCH.

* SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, under rule 41 (1) of the Madras Council Rules, I seek your permission to call the attention of the Hon. Minister for Works to a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the decision of the Government to wind up the State Broadcasting Branch of the Public Works Department with effect from 1st April 1961. The State Broadcasting Branch of the Public Works Department has been in existence for over 20 years and now besides Gazetted Officers there are over 200 employees in this branch. If at this stage, Government wind up this branch without definite proposals for the absorption of all the employees without adversely affecting their emoluments and service conditions, it will cause great hardship to all these employees and may perhaps even result in throwing them out of employment after nearly ten years of service. It is therefore necessary that provision has to be made for the absorption of all the employees without adversely affecting their emoluments and service conditions.

It may also be brought to the notice of the Government that this department was established in the year 1938 to maintain the medium of mass contact with the great masses of the people. It has been doing its work with great success. There are at present 4,200 receivers and in the Third Plan the number will considerably increase in which case the maintenance and establishment charges will be considerably decreased. Therefore this department should be considered as a social welfare department, as this is the only way to educate the illiterate adults.

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM : We are not cutting down that programme.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : I want that department to continue for that purpose. It is therefore strongly urged that the orders of the Government be kept in abeyance and further enquiry made into the working of the department.

THE HON. SRI P. KAKKAN : Sir, the State Broadcasting Department was constituted in 1938 with a view to disseminate authentic and latest news to the rural folk in the villages. The main function of the department is to install and maintain community radio sets in rural areas.

A Radio Engineer is in-charge of this department under the administrative control of Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (General). Under the Radio Engineer there are four Assistant Radio Engineers in-charge of four Circles with headquarters at Madras,

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Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore and Madurai. There are 62 Supervisors, 4 Technical Assistants, 63 Battery Transport peons besides office establishment. On 31st March 1960 there were 51 service stations and about 3,900 community radio sets.

The Estimates Committee of the Madras Legislative Assembly in its Sixth Report, October 1957, stated that the annual mainte- 3-20 p.m. nance charge levied for a community set installed in a panchayat at concessional rate is Rs. 90. But the actual cost of maintenance to Government of a community set comes to more than Rs. 200. In the case of the loudspeaker equipments in the Legislators' Hostel, the maintenance charges per annum are Rs. 230 per set. The cost of servicing, including the replacement of unserviceable parts by private firms may not exceed Rs. 25 per annum. Under present conditions, it may not also be difficult to get the servicing done by firms in the nearby towns whenever necessary and the owners of the radio sets themselves may have the servicing done directly instead of through department. This will not only avoid the delay involved in making the report and the inspection of the set by the Supervisor before carrying out repairs, but will also reduce the cost of servicing and there will be a saving in expenditure on account of the separate establishment maintained for this purpose. The Committee, therefore, strongly impressed on the Government the desirability of gradually abolishing the servicing stations and leaving the work of maintenance to the owners of radio sets themselves.

While formulating the Third Five-Year Plan the Sub-Group on 'Rural Broadcasting' suggested that the Panchayats and Local Bodies should be made responsible for the maintenance of the new sets to be installed in the Third Five-Year Plan. As regards the existing radio sets, the Sub-group has suggested that the centres may be given the option to maintain them at their own expense through private agencies.

The State Development Committee at its meeting held on 22nd December 1960 observed that the cost of maintenance of a set under the present organization comes to nearly Rs. 200 per year which is almost equal to the cost of a new set. The Committee therefore felt that it would be better to allow the Panchayat and other Local Bodies to get the sets maintained through local repairers in nearby towns. The Committee also suggested that the existing Broadcasting Department may be disbanded and the staff absorbed in suitable positions. After careful examination of the recommendations of the Estimates Committee, the Sub-Group on Rural Broadcasting and the State Development Committee, the Government passed the following orders early in March of this year :—

(1) The maintenance of the Community Radio sets be entrusted to the Panchayats and Local Bodies themselves with effect from 1st April 1961.

(2) The installation of communnity radio sets be entrusted to the local companies after inviting tenders; and

(3) The State Broadcasting Branch be wound up with effect from 1st April 1961 and the staff absorbed in suitable posts in Public Works and similar departments of Government.

The Chief Engineer (General) has reported that nucleus staff may be retained to arrange for the installation of public address systems, maintenance of loudspeaker equipment of State Legislature and for the collection of arrears and dues of maintenance charges for radio receiver sets from the Panchayats and that he has addressed various heads of departments for absorbing the surplus staff. He has also requested that time may be granted till 1st July 1961 for implementing the orders of Government for winding up the department. This is separately under the consideration of the Government. It is proposed to give time to the Chief Engineer till 1st July 1961, for winding up the State Broadcasting Branch as requested by him. But he is being asked to submit detailed proposals before 15th April 1961 for the retention of the barest minimum staff to attend to the residuary work and for the absorption of the balance of staff in suitable posts in other departments.

IV.—GOVERNMENT MOTION.

ASSOCIATION OF THREE MEMBERS WITH THE COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I move—

'That this House nominates the following three members to associate with the Committee on Subordinate Legislation of the Legislative Assembly for the financial year 1961–62 :—

Sri V. Rengaswamy,

,, L. S. Karayalar, and

,, Mohamed Raza Khan'.

MR CHAIRMAN: The question is—

'That this House nominates the following three members to associate with the Committee on Subordinate Legislation of the Legislative Assembly for the financial year 1961–62 :—

Sri V. Rengaswamy,

,, L. S. Karayalar, and

" Mohamed Raza Khan'.

The motion was put and carried.

V.—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

(1) DISCUSSION ON THE STATEMENT OF DEMANDS FOR GRANTS FOR EXCESS EXPENDITURE IN 1957–58.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN: Sir, I just like to say a few words. After all the excess expenditure is just only about rupees one crore. But I wish to refer to the report of the Public Accounts